
CAPITOL CONNECTION

A Weekly Update of News and Views
For Opinion Shapers and Policy Makers
Congressman Gary G. Miller
42nd District, California



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House Passes Defense Authorization Bill

On Thursday, by a strong bipartisan margin, the House passed legislation authorizing \$503.8 billion in funding for the Department of Defense and other important national defense activities. This annual authorization bill sets policy for the Pentagon for the coming year. Specifically, the bill seeks to protect our troops in harm's way by authorizing funding for mine resistant vehicles as well as funding for improvised explosive device (IED) jammers. To help meet the needs of our troops and their families, the measure also authorizes a 3.5 percent pay raise for active duty servicemembers and prohibits an increase in military health care cost shares and premiums. Congressman Miller supported passage of the bill despite reservations about cuts to several important defense programs. He looks forward to working with his colleagues in the coming months to address these concerns and implement a bill that meets the immediate needs of our Armed Forces.

Congress Adopts "Tax and Spend" Budget

On Thursday, the House and Senate both adopted the final version of the congressional budgetary blueprint for Fiscal Year 2008. This budget resolution, which sets targeted spending levels for the upcoming year, includes one of the largest tax increases in American history, fails to address needed reforms to unsustainable mandatory spending programs, and increases discretionary spending by \$22 billion beyond the President's initial budget request. In passing the resolution, the House also voted to raise the national debt limit by \$850 billion beyond the current \$8.965 trillion limit to accommodate the extra spending. Congressman Miller strongly opposed this new "tax and spend" budget resolution and he will continue fighting to reduce the tax burden on American families, balance the federal budget, and restore fiscal accountability to our government.

Senate Reaches Amnesty Agreement

Yesterday, the Senate and the White House announced that they have reached an agreement to move forward with legislation that would essentially grant amnesty to millions of illegal immigrants by putting them on a path to citizenship. The Senate plans to consider the proposal next week, and if it passes, it will move to the House for consideration. Congressman Miller continues to oppose any and all forms of amnesty. He believes we must take an enforcement first approach to immigration reform that closes and strengthens the borders and cracks down on employers that hire illegal aliens. As Congressman Miller continues to work to defend our borders and oppose amnesty, he appreciates the overwhelming support that he has received from constituents that have called and written to express their opposition to the Senate amnesty plan.

House Votes to Honor Fallen Troops

Currently, the U.S. Flag Code only allows the President to order the flag flown at half-staff for stipulated periods including Memorial Day and "upon the death of principal figures of the United States Government and the Governor of a state, territory or possession." To ensure that Americans can properly honor our troops killed in combat, the House on Tuesday passed legislation that would modernize the Flag Code. Specifically, this bill would allow governors to order the national flag flown at half-staff when a member of the Armed Forces from their state dies while serving on active duty. Congressman Miller was proud to support this measure when it came to the House floor and he thanks all the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines of the 42nd District for their brave service to our country.

Mission Viejo to Hold Street Painting Festival

This weekend, the Children's Creative Festival will celebrate its ninth annual street painting festival, "Fun with Chalk," at the Mission Viejo Community Center. In addition to street painting, an Italian tradition that dates back to the sixteenth century, the event will also feature art workshops, live music, and entertainment. For those interested in attending, the festival will take place at the Norman P. Murray Community Center at 24932 Veterans Way and La Paz Road in Mission Viejo from 10 A.M. to 6 P.M. this Saturday and Sunday. Congressman Miller congratulates the Children's Creative Festival organizers and participants for their efforts to inspire creativity and promote art appreciation. For more information, please visit the Fun with Chalk website at <http://www.funwithchalk.com/>.